



**Department of Energy**  
Bonneville Power Administration  
P.O. Box 491  
Vancouver, Washington 98666-0491

TRANSMISSION BUSINESS LINE

October 3, 2003

In reply refer to: T-DITT-2

**To: People Interested in the Nisqually Transmission Line Relocation Project**

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to relocate two miles of transmission line corridor off the Nisqually Indian Reservation (Reservation) in Thurston County, Washington. This letter briefly explains what is being proposed, outlines the environmental process, provides information about the tribal and public meetings, and how you can comment on the project.

**Background**

BPA has an existing transmission line corridor across the Reservation and a portion of the Fort Lewis Military Base (Fort Lewis) just north of State Route 510 (see enclosed Vicinity Map). This corridor contains two BPA transmission lines: the Olympia-Grand Coulee 287-kilovolt (kV) line and the Olympia-South Tacoma 230-kV line.

Together with the Nisqually Indian Tribe (Tribe), Fort Lewis and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, BPA is proposing to remove both of the existing transmission lines, about one mile each, from the Reservation and relocate them onto Fort Lewis land just south of State Route 510. BPA would obtain a permit from Fort Lewis for the relocated corridors. This relocation is being proposed because the 50-year easement for one of the lines on the Reservation has expired. The second line has a perpetual easement. The Tribe has requested that BPA remove both lines from the Reservation, and from another parcel of land the Tribe is proposing to obtain from Fort Lewis. The Tribe would like to use the highway frontage now occupied by the lines in the existing corridor for Reservation community development.

The relocation of the corridor may be completed in two phases (see Vicinity Map) when funding becomes available. As part of the proposal, the Tribe would also purchase several parcels of county-owned lands located within Fort Lewis. The Tribe would then give those lands to Fort Lewis in exchange for a Fort-owned parcel adjacent to the Reservation (see the Land Exchange Map).

**Environmental Process**

In addition to the proposal to remove and relocate the lines, BPA is also considering three alternatives. Alternative 1 would rebuild the Olympia-South Tacoma 230-kV line so that it could carry both lines across the Reservation. Alternative 2 would relocate only the Olympia-Grand Coulee line, leaving the Olympia-South Tacoma line on the Reservation. The No Action Alternative, an alternative we always consider, would leave the situation as is.

BPA will analyze the potential impacts of the proposed relocation and alternatives. We will study potential impacts on wildlife, vegetation (tree clearing), water and wetlands, visual quality, historic resources, northern spotted owl habitat, land use, socioeconomics, and other resources. You may see survey crews and environmental specialists in the area as they begin preliminary design and analysis for the proposal. BPA will then develop an environmental assessment (EA) document that describes the potential impacts.

**Public Meetings**

As part of the analysis process we would like your comments on the project. We'd like to know if you have questions. Are there other alternatives we should consider? What resources should we analyze? Your comments will help us make sure that we have considered all aspects of the proposal and that we can make an informed decision. We have scheduled a Tribal and open house public meeting to explain the proposed project and to hear your ideas.

**Public Meeting:**

Wednesday, Oct. 22, 2003

6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.

Yelm Senior Multipurpose Center

Senior Citizens Center

201 Yelm Ave E

Yelm, Wash. 98597-7662

**How to Comment**

Comments for this phase of the project will be accepted through Nov. 21, 2003. There will be additional opportunities to comment once the preliminary EA is developed. There are a number of ways for you to comment on the project. You can mail the enclosed comment form to BPA, Communications – KC-7, P.O. Box 14428, Portland OR 97293-4428, fax them to 503-230-3285 or email us at [comment@bpa.gov](mailto:comment@bpa.gov). Please include the name of this project with your comments.

**Schedule**

This fall we will begin our analysis using your comments to help determine potential impacts. In the spring of 2004 the preliminary EA will be released. By fall 2004, BPA will describe the potential impacts of the proposal, and decide whether and how to proceed with the project. If BPA decides to proceed, construction would likely begin in spring 2005.

**For More Information**

If you need more information about the Nisqually Transmission Line Relocation Project, please call toll-free at 1-888-276-7790 or send me an email [gobeck@bpa.gov](mailto:gobeck@bpa.gov). Thank you for your interest in our work.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Gary Beck, 10/3/03*

Gary Beck  
Project Manager